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ONCHI

The accomplishments of Onchi Kōshirō 恩地孝四郎 (1891–1955) throughout the first half of the 20th century extend far beyond his eminence as a printmaker. He was an innovator who domesticated the ideas and ideals of abstraction and "creative printmaking" in Japan when still in art school. He was also an oil painter, largely in his early years, where he experimented with themes and concepts he would also apply to his prints.

From his early years, working with Takehisa Yumeiji 竹久夢二, among others, he began a long career as a book designer and book illustrator. From the very beginning of his life in the arts he was the center and focus of the Creative Print movement, surrounding himself with fellow artists who took inspiration from his dedication to the cause of self-expression. From his student efforts in the nineteen-teens creating the amazing TSUKUHAE journal until his premature and much-mourned death in the 50s, he was a dominant influence in his world.

He was also a poet and photographer of no mean skill. He combined all those interests in the wonderful artist's books he created, such masterworks as UMI NO DOWA, KISETSU-HYŌ, HIKKO KANNO, among many others. He was editor of the most important book arts periodical of the pre-War period, SHOSŌ magazine. He designed over a thousand books, collaborated in his later years with such important figures as Kitasono Katue - in short, he was the major figure involved with works on paper in his time and provided support and inspiration to scores of other artists.

It has been decades since the wonderful work on Onchi done by Elizabeth Swinton, THE GRAPHIC ART OF ONCHI KOSHIRO; INNOVATION AND TRADITION, the only substantial work on him ever written in English. Though he is the subject of a small cottage industry of scholarship in Japan, he is largely a much-admired mystery abroad in the 21st century.

So, we thought it might be fun to put together a smattering of interesting material by him that covers the breadth of his interests: sketches, illustrations, artist's books, his book of photography, one of the products in book form of the wartime Thursday Group, 4 amazing and rare oil paintings, several books designed by him, and a run of SHOSŌ magazine. The list goes on. But have a look and see for yourself.

There are treasures herein.

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1. 90465. Onchi Kōshirō [artist and author] 恩地 孝四郎. **Kanjō 感情 Sentiment.** 大正7 [1918] . Tokyo. Kanjō Shisha 感情詩社 Issue 20; June of 3rd year. 20号 3年6月号 23.5 x 15.5cm magazine with self-wrappers in [original?] glassine. 30 pages with introduction and poetry by Onchi with 12 black and white woodblock prints. Poetry, essays and description of art by Onchi and others in Japanese text. Kanjō 感情 Sentiment was a monthly magazine of poetry and art that published approx. 32 issues, beginning in Taisho 5 [1916].

Onchi (1891–1955) and his work need no introduction - he is considered the most important Japanese printmaker of the mid-Century and one of the most innovative and creative of all time. As a leader of the Sosaku Hanga Creative Print movement, he guided the development of many of the dominant figures of post-war art until his premature death in the 1950's.

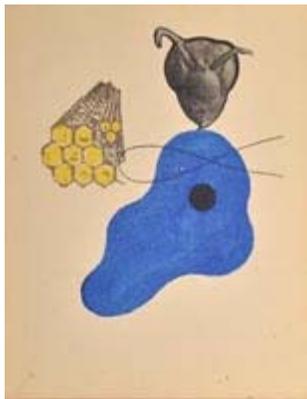
Notable are the woodcuts on page 8 and 9、Jyotaini Kanshite 女体に関して and Jyotaini Tsuite 女体について, respectively, that experiment with the abstraction of the female form, the beginnings of a theme which Onchi explored throughout his career. This particular issue is also important as he explores the relationship between his lyrical images and the art of woodblock as well as lyricism and modernism in the early 20th Century in two essays. Ref Elizabeth Swinton, *The Graphic Art of Onchi Koshiro*, p.99.

Toned wrappers and light foxing not affecting artwork. Only copy of this issue we could locate is held in Maebashi Bungakukan (Maebashi City Museum of Literature) 前橋文学館.

\$1,250.00

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4.88936. ONCHI KOSHIRO, artist. **CHU.GYO.KAI.** 26.6 X 20.8 cm. #158 of 250cc. Aoi Shobō. A wonderful Onchi cover and 10 prints inside, illustrating his poem fragments. The combination of the abstract and the figurative is lovely and moving. Published during the war Showa 18 - 1943) in Tokyo, as part of the series SHOSO HANGACHŌ JURENSHU, it is very hard to find. This is a a clean, very good copy. Includes the original announcement for the JURENSHU series as published in one of the SHOSŌmagazine pamphlets. In a custom clasped chitsu case.

\$3,850.00

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5. 87615. ONCHI Kōshirō. **Drawing for Gekkan KYŌTO Magazine.** An



original drawing and magazine printer's proof page, tipped onto a single sheet, 27.4 x 19.2 cm., along with a xerox of the illustration and article as printed in the magazine in 1951. The article was entitled "HAHA NO TERYŌRI" ["MOM'S HOME COOKING"] and the illustration is of a homely meal of tōfu, herbs and a chawanmushi, with Onchi's calligraphed caption. As is evident from the proof and the printed article, it was all quite faithfully reproduced. Charming and effecting evocation of a warmly remembered distant past, long before the war and the privations all around. A very nice and contextualized presentation.

\$975.00

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6. 81074. ONCHI Kōshiro, artist. **A Framed Collection of Woodcut Illustrations.** After the war, Onchi Kōshiro created a series of woodcut illustrations for a project involving the publication of a revamped classroom curriculum for Japanese students in the post-war era. For whatever reason, those designs do not appear to have been used - they do not appear in his catalog raisonné of prints and book illustrations. Though a series of edited and expurgated pre-war textbooks were employed immediately after the war, more permanent changes in the curriculum were not effected for several years. As this set of Onchi illustrations were designed to be used in a basic Japanese

language book, it is possible that the extensive language reform after the war stopped the finalization and publication of the textbook at all.

In any event, the set has a few marginal notations which indicate page placement, etc., so the project must have proceeded to the mock-up level before being abandoned. There are 11 cuts in b+w with two having light coloration. Portraits of Tolstoy, Einstein, Lincoln and Franklin combine with landscapes, insects, children at play, etc. The images seem to be suffused with a gentle sadness - they certainly seem to capture the spirit of the times. Truly a lovely and important group. There is no way to overestimate Onchi's importance to 20th century Japanese print making. This experimental group of cuts is a tribute to his art and an accurate evocation of an age. Framed in a custom mat.

\$1,850.00

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7. 88325. ONCHI Kōshirō, et al. **HAKUBUTSU-FU.** Tokyo: Shōwa 25 [1950]. Small oblong western-style book, printed paper-covered boards with a leather spine, 11.2 x 14.5 cm. An out-of-series copy of the edition of 200 [of 250] copies, signed and sealed by the editor, Onchi. This "NATURAL HISTORY SKETCHBOOK" represents the first creative effort of the ICHIMOKUKAI, the print group around Onchi. Though designed during the early years of the Pacific War, it wasn't actually printed until 1949-50 in a small limited edition. There are five color woodcut sōsaku hanga prints by each of the five artists involved; Onchi created the



animal prints; Yamaguchi Gen did shells; Sekino Jun'ichirô, insects; Katô Tarô, trees; and Sugihara Masami, flowers: 25 prints in all. Plus, there is a printed "shita-e" style design on the contents page, and the title page and covers are printed as well. This is an extremely important and handsome work from Onchi's school. In near perfect condition in the original glassine in the original box with a printed paper label.

\$1,850.00

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8. 87611. ONCHI Kôshiro. **HAKUBUTSUSHI Zuihitsu Shashin.** Tokyo, Genkôsha, Shôwa 17 [1942], 1 of 1500cc, Cloth, printed in silver ink, 27.0 x 19.4 cm. Very unusual work by Onchi, combining his written thought on natural forms with reproductions of his photography (depicting plants, insects, animals). Interesting, scarce. here in near fine condition in the original dustwrapper, all in the original printed cardboard slipcase. [Urawa, p.51] Complete, thus.

\$1,850.00

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9. 87937. ONCHI Kôshiro. **HAKUBUTSUSHI Zuihitsu Shashin.** Tokyo, Genkôsha, Shôwa 17 [1942], 1 of 1500cc, Cloth, printed in silver ink, 27.0 x 19.4 cm. Very unusual work by Onchi, combining his written thought on natural forms with reproductions of his photography (depicting plants, insects, animals). Interesting, scarce. here internally very good, but without its dustwrapper or slipcase with a worn and starting cover and priced accordingly. [Urawa, p.51]

\$485.00

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10. 87363. ONCHI Kôshiro. **HON NO BIJUTSU**. 1952. Large 8vo., 135pp., hand-bound By Sei-ensô in decorated leather. This is one of only 5 copies so bound of the entire edition of 1500 copies. Illustrated mostly in b+w, but with color plates. This is Onchi's seminal work on book design (the title translates as "book arts"); it includes his opinions on book aesthetics and a catalogue of his own extensive output of book designs. There is a bit of scant light foxing to some text leaves, but the illustrations are clean. Housed in (the original?) handmade paper-covered clamshell box. This is an essential work by arguably the most important book designer of modern Japan.

\$1,200.00

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11. 87288. ONCHI Koshirô, artist & MAEDA Sekibô, poet. **Kashû SHINSHÔ FUJI** [Collection of Poetry: NEW PRAISE, FUJI] Tokyo: Fugaku Honsha, Shôwa 21 [1946]. 28.7 x 20 cm. 2 full page color woodcuts designed by Onchi, 1 tipped-in page of printed calligraphy. Blue and white flexible covers, in a dustwrapper depicting Fuji which is also a print designed by Onchi. Dustwrapper lightly foxed and strengthened on reverse at center with a thin strip of paper that goes from head to heel. Onchi's designs are lovely. Very good. [See Sotheby's Schlosser Sale Item #302 for another copy; Hillier Vol. 2, p 1022]

\$1,200.00

13. 41437. (ONCHI, Koshiro). **KOSHIRO ONCHI, 1891-1955: WOODCUTS**, July 11-Sept. 20, 1964. San Francisco: (Auerhahn Press), 1964. Exhibition catalogue, 8vo., white paper-wrapped stiff wrappers; 38 pp. Slight offsetting at front wrapper. Very good.

\$30.00

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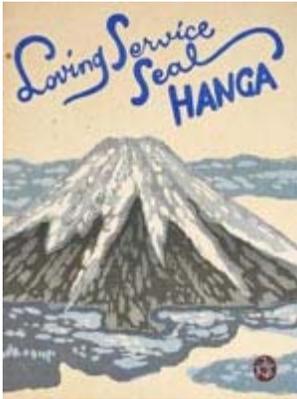
14. 86419. ONCHI Kôshiro, author. **KUSA MUSHI TABI**. Tokyo, Ryuseikaku, Showa 18 [1943] Small 12mo., bound Western-style, stiff wrappers. Publisher's slipcase. Near fine in original glassine. With textual illustrations by Onchi



throughout, this is a journal of his "random thoughts" while travelling and thinking about nature, life, art and what it means to be an artist and author. An interesting work of this vitally important figure of 20th Century Japan. A record that deserves to be translated into English, if any does. A lovely copy of this book.

\$185.00

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15. 85345. ONCHI Kôshiro. **LOVING SERVICE SEAL HANGA**. 28.3 X 21.2 CM. Tokyo: The Central Community Chest of Japan, Inc., (1953). The front and back covers of this pamphlet are color woodblock prints by Onchi. There is a text folder inside by Onchi enclosing 10 small woodblock print seals by the noted "Creative Print" artists Kitaoka Fumio and Shinagawa Takumi, each captioned on a separate sheet. Extremely unusual work rarely found in any condition but here complete and very clean. One of the last works issued by Onchi. About fine condition, fine impressions and colors.

\$750.00

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16. 83318. ONCHI Koshiro. **Shikashû Anthology of Contemporary Japan NIHON NO HANA FLOWERS OF JAPAN**. Tokyo: Hongakusha, Shôwa 21 [1946]. Another Hongakusha work, this one is edited by Onchi Kôshiro, and many of the lovely woodcut textual illustrations are by him as well. Other artists include the important Creative Print movement figures Kawakami Sumio, Kawanishi Hide and Maekawa Sempan. The poets include Satô Haruo, Kitahara Hyakushu and Onchi, himself. A tour- de-force and important work, good in the original woodcut printed wrapper (by Onchi).

\$975.00

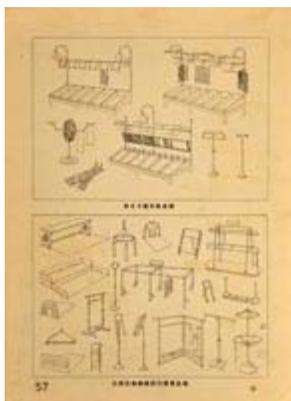
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17. 82094. ONCHI Koshiro, artist; Inoue Yasufumi, poet. **Shishû UME**. Fugaku Honsha, Shôwa 22 [1947]. #275 of 600cc, signed by Inoue, the author. 8vo, printed decorative wrappers, book designed by Onchi Kôshiro, frontispiece a woodcut designed by Onchi, as well. [Onchi Raissonne, #281, "Portrait of a Poet (Inner Image)"]. Wrappers foxed along perimeters and there is a bit of light foxing on the signed sheet, else clean and in very good condition.

\$485.00

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20. 89334. ONCHI Koshirô, editor. **SHOSO 16**. Tokyo, Vol.3 #4, August Showa 11 [1936]. Aoi Shobô. Ltd. edition, out of series, [700cc?] 8vo. in size, wrappers. SHOSO magazine was the premier journal dedicated to the book arts of its day. This is the special issue on illustration for poetry collections. Very scarce. Very good overall.

\$265.00

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21. 87930. OZAKI Kohachi, author. ONCHI Kôshiro. **KOMAKUSA**. Tôkyô, Shôwa 18 [1943]. Single sheet, 29.2 x 34.3 cm. Meant to fold in fourths as a simple species of "book" during the wartime shortage of paper. The lightly colored woodblock print by Onchi is some 11.0 x 15.4 cm. It was cut and printed by members of the Hanga Kurabu. Ozaki [1892-1974] had known Onchi for many years when he collaborated with him on this little illustrated poem, named after a species of mountain flower common to Japan. Extremely ephemeral. I can find no reference to it in either the English language or Japanese sources, nor does it appear in the Onchi print raisonne. It has, of course, been folded and then flattened again. Overall good condition, a good impression of the print.

\$650.00

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22. 88836 . KITASONO Katue, poet & ONCHI Kôshirô, artist. **Shishû NATSU NO TEGAMI**. Tôkyô, Aoi Shobô, Shôwa 12 [1937] Folio, 30.0 X 22.0 cm, #11 of 200 copies printed. The binding, the typography, the illustrations, all combine as a fluid visual container for Kitasono's brilliant poems. Interesting to compare this work to the other collaboration (done by the same publisher a year later) of Onchi and Kitasono, SABOTEN-TO. On an interesting side note, when Kitasono sent a copy of this book to his friend Ezra Pound, for whom he had obtained a lucrative position for the JAPAN TIMES as Italian correspondent, the latter

confessed he could not even begin to read it (his Chinese was poor and his Japanese non-existent). There is not space here to even begin to describe Kitasono's importance to world art and literature. I would refer you to the several works of John Solt, both translations and critical essays, as well as several exhibitions dedicated to Kitasono mounted here and in Europe, as well. Fine condition, complete as issued. I can locate only two institutional holdings, the British Museum and Mount Holyoke College. I have handled a another copy of this work, which had what was almost certainly the original wraparound case with a printed title label, a detail which this lovely copy does not include, alas. Priced accordingly.

\$3,850.00

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24. 87511. [ONCHI Kôshirô - BINDING] SHIODA Rikizô, author. **TOJI KÔGEI NO KENKYÛ**. Tokyo: ARS, Shôwa 2 [1927]. 8, 8, 537+ pp. Small 8vo., blue-green cloth, gilt and blindstamped, in the original printed publisher's slipcase. Very good condition. Interestingly, it is not included in the Onchi binding raisonne, ONCHI KÔSHIRÔ SEIHON NO GYÔ. Besides the Onchi binding, this is an important and interesting book in its own right, having been written by the scholar Shioda on ceramic art, with a large section of illustrations.

\$185.00

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25. 87512. [ONCHI - BINDING] ITÔ Einosuke, author. **UMI NO ONI**. Osaka: Mishima Shobô, Shôwa 22 [1947] 255+ pp. Small 8vo., Printed wrappers. Printed on very good quality paper. Very good condition. Interestingly, not included in the Onchi binding raisonne, ONCHI KÔSHIRÔ SEIHON NO GYÔ. Itô Einosuke [1903-59] was an important proletarian literary figure.

\$125.00



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26. 87513. [ONCHI - BINDING] TSUBOTA Jôji, author. **TSURU NO ONGAESHI**. Tokyo: Shinchôsha, Shôwa 18 [1943] 2nd printing, 288+ pp. Small 8vo., Printed wrappers. Browning, good condition overall. Interestingly, not included in the Onchi binding raisonne, ONCHI KÔSHIRÔ SEIHON NO GYÔ. A retelling of the old folk tale, THE CRANE'S GRATITUDE.

\$150.00

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27. 87514. [ONCHI - BINDING] TOMIZUKA Kiyoshi, editor. **HIKÔKI**. Tokyo: ARS, Shôwa 29 [1954]. Small 8vo. Half leatheroid and marbled boards. Gilt. In the decorated publisher's slipcase. This is number 28 (on AIRPLANES) from the series NIHON IDÔ BUNKO [CHILDREN'S LIBRARY OF JAPAN]. Near fine copy. Though #35 from the series does appear in the Onchi binding catalogue, this one does not. Illustrated throughout. An interesting little book.

\$185.00

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28. 87515. [ONCHI - BINDING] KOYAMA Itoko, author. **KÔYA**. Tokyo: Shinchôsha, Shôwa 15 [1940] 1st printing, 363+ pp. Small 8vo.,



Patterned paper over boards, printed slipcase. Brownded, good condition overall. Included in the Onchi binding raisonne, ONCHI KÔSHIRÔ SEIHON NO GYÔ as #313 (though they do not illustrate the slipcase). Fiction by this well regarded female author, many of whose books were designed by Onchi.

\$145.00

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29. 87516. [ONCHI - BINDING] TERA0 & HONDA, authors. **DÔBUTSU TO SHOKUBUTSU NO SEIKATSU**. Tokyo: Shinchôsha, Shôwa 18 [1940] 1st printing, prelims, 287+ pp. Small 8vo., Printed paper over boards, cloth spine, printed slipcase, very good condition overall. Interestingly, not included in the Onchi binding catalogue, ONCHI KÔSHIRÔ SEIHON NO GYÔ, but appears on page 128 of HON NO BIJUTSU. This lovely illustrated DAILY LIFE OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

was the seventh volume of the SHIN NIHON SHÔNEN SHÔJO BUNKO, the New Japanese Library For Boys and Girls.

\$165.00

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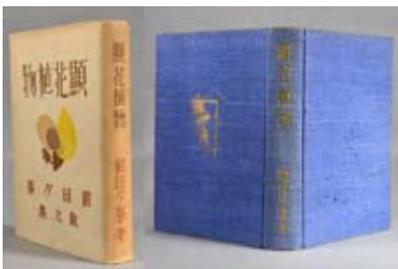


30. 87518. [ONCHI - BINDING] NAGAYO Yoshirô, author. **SONO YORU**. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, Shôwa 23 [1948] 1st printing, 6, 337+ pp. 8vo., Decorated wrappers, Printed slipcase, some browning to slipcase, else very good condition overall. Included in the Onchi binding catalogue, ONCHI KOSHIRO SEIHON NO GYO as #321, also color illustrated in HON NO BIJUTSU, though neither reference shows the slipcase. Nagayo Yoshirô [1888-1961] had been a member of the Shirakaba group in the teens and was known as a representative of its characteristic humanism as an author and playwright. One of Onchi's

better late bindings.

\$165.00

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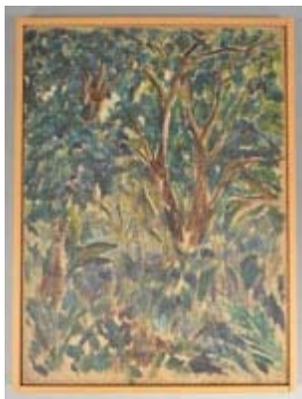


31. 87519.[ONCHI-BINDING]MAEDA Yûgure, author. **KENKA SHOKUBUTSU**. Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, Shôwa 11 [1936] 1st printing, 5, 304+ pp. Small 8vo., Blue cloth with silver, fine in decorated dustwrapper. The dustwrapper is a bit soiled and rumpled but quite marvelous. It is listed as #304 in ONCHI KÔSHIRÔSEIHON NO GYÔ. Maeda Yûgure [1883-1951] was the author of KASHÛSHINSHO FUJI from the same period, which Onchi illustrated and whose binding he designed, as well. The delicate colored abstraction on the dustwrapper

and the tooled abstraction in the cloth cover are vintage Onchi.

\$185.00

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33. 87970. ONCHI Koshiro. **[A GROVE OF TREES]** Oil on canvas, 45 x 33 cm. It is from a series of landscapes done in 1921. It is unsigned, but its authenticity is attested to by Onchi's eldest son, Kunio, on a slip affixed on the reverse of the canvas, with his personal seal.

\$6,500.00

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35. 90571. Onchi Kōshirō 恩地孝四郎. [Chūgoku Fūkei Chinese Landscape #6] [中国風景 6号]. [Oil Painting]. [1939]. Image size approx 41 x 32cm and frame size approx 54.5 x 45.5cm. Oil on canvas. Signed by the artist. Oil painting of a landscape likely exhibited at the show, Onchi Kōshirō Shina Fūkei Gaten 恩地孝四郎支那風景画展 [Onchi Kōshirō Chinese Landscapes Art Exhibit] held at the Shinjuku branch of Isetan Department Store in October of 1939 when Onchi was 48 years old. (See "Gendai Bijutsu" 現代美術 [Modern Art] Vol 7-2.) As were many other important Japanese artists during the Chinese conflict and Pacific War, he was sent by the armed forces in 1939 to record the war on the ground. Much like Yoshida Hiroshi, he captured both beauty and pathos in China as the war ground on.

\$12,000.00

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